

Handout 5

Idea=

"That which comes before the mind/
that which is the object of the mind when it thinks."

For example:

Sense perceptions

Mathematical Objects

Passions

Origin of Ideas (Locke's Acquisition Thesis):

"senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet ... [which] ... are lodged in memory, and names got to them ... and the mind, proceeding farther, abstracts them, and by degrees learns the use of general names." (BK I, CH II, §15)

Things → Blank tablet + God-given mental powers → Ideas

An idea is either an "actual perception or else, having been an actual perception, is so in the mind that by the memory it can be made an actual perception again." (BK I, CH IV, §20)

Simple idea of sensation (single sense): patch of white

Simple idea of sensation (two senses): Edge-of-the-surface

Simple idea of reflection: thinking of what I saw (the patch of white)

Complex ideas:

piece of wax (individual substance)

wax (species/natural kind...substance in general)

number (simple mode general)

theft (mixed mode general)

to the left of me (relations)